

Yankee Business Ingenuity

BY FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

The American boy should be taught that the ideas which have formed the foundation stones of the great American business enterprises have not all sprung from the rich and mighty. The American disregard for conventionalities and the national crying out for something new unite to offer a golden opportunity to him who has an idea—whatever the idea is or whoever may be the man to bring it forward. That peculiar quality which enables the Yankee to see into the future by the light of a shining coin, is not often a gift to be lightly prized. Furthermore, it is a kind of prophecy which defies not small things.

Every town in the country, almost, now has a "pressing club," which contracts to press and clean all one's outer clothing for a certain amount per month—usually \$1—with no limitation on the number of times the clothes are to be pressed. The crowd in Uncle Sam's trousers has been much nearer and more distinct since the beginning of pressing clubs. A boy working in a tailor's shop in an Iowa town was kept busy only part of the time pressing suits of clothes for 50 cents each. He had an idea. He calculated that many suits of clothes he could press if he were kept busy all the time. He calculated what it would cost, his own wages being \$7 a week. Then he started the town pressing suit for 50 cents a month, and he had a handsome profit besides. From that beginning the pressing club spread all over the country in a remarkably short time.

A small retailer in a Southern city was dragging along in business, barely able to make both ends meet. One day he found that the store building next door could be rented for a very small sum. He had an idea. He called on a friend, who was interested in the moving picture machine business. They calculated how many chairs could be put in the empty store, and how much they could take in at a nickel a head if they played to capacity, and gave a show every twenty minutes. It looked good. The store was rented, a moving picture machine and a big phonograph installed and the first "Nickelodeon" was ready for business.

Afterward, when this man went to his bank to borrow money to expand his business to several other cities, he showed to the satisfaction of the bankers that he had netted \$12,000 the first six months. These five-cent theaters are now to be found in every town in the country, and their number is increasing every day. There are over 500 of them in Chicago.

Even in these piping times of peace and prosperity, with opportunities scattered around thick as hops, adversity will sometimes bring a man down to hard pan. A short time ago, an unlucky fellow struck Atlanta. He was "dead broke," and didn't know where to get a job. There was labor on the streets at about a dollar a day, but he had been used to better money. He had an idea. He arranged a raffle, and offered to work a whole week for the man who drew the lucky number. He sold fifty chances at a dollar each, and soon had \$50 in his pocket. A grocer won the raffle and put his man to driving a delivery wagon. The man soon got on his feet, and is now successful, but is still a bit proud of the fact that he is the only man who ever drove a grocer's delivery wagon for \$50 a week.

A merchant in a Western city was desirous of reducing his stock without delay, and was willing to make a liberal sacrifice of profits to do so. He announced a 30 to 50 per cent reduction sale. It was a bona fide, and the prices had been cut, but the public had seen such announcements before, and was slow to come in. The merchant was discouraged. Then he had an idea. The newspapers next day carried big announcements that at this store every fourth yard of every fourth article of the same price would be sold for 9 cents, no matter whether it was worth 10 cents or \$50. A woman came in to buy an article which cost \$3. She bought two others which cost the same amount, and then a fourth for which she paid only 9 cents. The fourth, eighth, and twelfth yards of every kind of cloth went for 9 cents. The store was packed and jammed, and the stock cleared up in a hurry. Yet it was practically the same 25 per cent reduction sale which had been advertised so unsuccessfully. The proposition was merely put in a more convincing way.

A Chicago savings bank and a Chicago store went into an agreement to promote healthful business publicity, and also to inculcate habits of saving into their customers. The store advertised that with every purchase of \$5 worth of goods, or more, the proprietor would start a savings bank account in the name of the customer with an initial deposit of \$1. The customer came in, bought \$5 worth of goods, and received an order on a certain bank. He then went to the bank and received a regular bank book with a credit of \$1. Two months after the scheme was inaugurated, there had been 2,000 such accounts opened, the great majority of which were constantly being increased.

Systematic "town boosting" is a feature of American business activity which aims at the general good instead of personal profit. One Western town had a board of trade which had slept along for years without doing anything in particular except eating some food once a year at a banquet and listening to some spread-eagle oratory. The organization became moribund, and its presidency was an honor no longer sought for. The directors met and gave the place to a young man of the type "we like to encourage." The young man took his job seriously and went to work. It wasn't long before he grew an idea of his own.

Every new family that moved to town he spotted. Employment was provided for the bread-winners where necessary, and the new people were made to feel at home. When this personal attention had got in its work, a representative of the board of trade interviewed the head of the new family. This interview was incorporated into a letter, mimeograph copies were made, put into stamped envelopes, and made ready to mail. Then the letters were taken to the newcomer and he was asked to address them to his friends "back East." The scheme worked like magic, and several times re-elected president of the board of trade, and he can have anything the people of that town can give him.

General movements toward a certain purpose on the part of disconnected retail stores dealing in a certain line of wares are difficult to undertake. Yet the trade papers of the country are inaugurating many of them, with some signs of success. The general merchant in a small town finds his most dangerous competition in the great mail-order stores of the big

cities. These merchants are now being urged to acquire stock in the local newspapers, to increase their home advertising, and so prevail upon the home newspaper to refuse to advertise the mail-order establishments. In many places this anti-mail-order crusade has been united with the "town-boosting" propaganda, and the people are being urged to spend their money with the home stores. If this movement should continue to grow it may have a decided effect upon the destiny of the retail mercantile business.

The country newspaper man needs more ingenuity than any other man, he thinks. Generally he has his share. There are many country editors who think only of politics, and generally these fail to make financial successes, but in those instances where business brains and business industry are applied to the job, the country weekly makes a good business of attending fairs and shows and even big gatherings of farmers. He was often accosted in this fashion: "If I knew how much I owed you, I would pay it to-day." The crowd in Uncle Sam's trousers has been much nearer and more distinct since the beginning of pressing clubs. A boy working in a tailor's shop in an Iowa town was kept busy only part of the time pressing suits of clothes for 50 cents each. He had an idea. He calculated that many suits of clothes he could press if he were kept busy all the time. He calculated what it would cost, his own wages being \$7 a week. Then he started the town pressing suit for 50 cents a month, and he had a handsome profit besides. From that beginning the pressing club spread all over the country in a remarkably short time.

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street were credited in both the office account books and the pocket edition. There was no confusion, no trouble, and at the end of a year the editor was nearly a thousand dollars ahead in his collections on subscriptions. The plan was exploited by the press associations, and now country newspaper owners all over the Union are doing the same thing.

More men for several thousand years left his wife to do the washing. Consequently, when civilization advanced to the point that he had to live and have a large part of his being in a downtown office, he missed the home laundry. The towels were always dirty. He could never remember to send for the laundryman. A fellow who was a keen student of human nature saw the problem and offered a solution. Now every office in almost every city in the land is provided daily with fresh towels, soap, and the like for a regular monthly price. But while it is a common, everyday matter now, it has not always been so, and the pioneer towel man made a little fortune before the scheme became public property. Another like instance was the man who first conceived the idea of furnishing pure spring water to offices and keeping the cooler supplied with ice. It is done everywhere now, but the man with the idea was paid for his originality.

There are hundreds of such opportunities just waiting to be discovered. They are unborn now, will be novel to-morrow, and next year they will be accepted as necessities of life. Let the reader of this put his head between his hands and think hard. If he can peer into the future far enough to see how he can supply the public with something it needs and wants, and supply that thing in an attractive and convenient fashion, there is a fortune for him at the end of his thinking.

To-morrow—Drainage of Swamp Lands.

RIDGLEY'S REPRISAL

BY EDNA KERR.

Herbert Morrow, bent and careworn, passed the parlor door. His daughter Daisy smiled up at him as he glanced at her in passing, but the smile turned into a sigh as the bowed figure vanished. "Is the run on the bank serious?" asked Degnon. "Your father looks very badly."

"I am afraid that it is serious," she answered. She was engaged to Degnon, and trusted his discretion.

"I saw the evening papers," he said. "but I thought that it was just a sensational playing up of an incident. May I go in and see Mr. Morrow?"

"I wish you would," she said. "I seem so helpless. I think he would like to talk to you with a man."

The banker looked up wearily as Degnon entered the library. He liked this clean-cut young chap, who had come to Midvale to take charge of the electric plant. Degnon went directly to the matter at issue.

"I have come to see if I can be of any service," he began. "I have some \$25,000 that I can get hold of for to-morrow."

"Too little, but I thank you, my boy," said the president of the Union Bank. "The crowd is way out," persisted Degnon. "Just how does the matter stand?"

"It is a plot of Ridgley's," began the banker. "It cannot be proven, but he practically owns the Provident Savings Bank, as well as the First National."

"That is news to me," said Degnon. "And to most others. For some reason Ridgley does not want his connection with the Provident Bank known. Now, just at present there is a heavy demand for money on short time loans. The high rates of interest have led both the Provident and my own bank, the Union, to send all of our surplus to the city banks. Ridgley sees his chance to put me out of business by starting a run. He knows that there is not enough money in either bank to meet a run but the First National will help the Provident. I shall have to suspend until I can recall the money on deposit in the city."

"I think I see," mused Degnon. "Both banks need money. The Provident can get it from its sister bank, the Union. Ridgley will have to admit its inability to pay depositors. They turn shaky about your bank and go to the rival institution."

"That's part of the scheme. The rest is this: Next week the interest accrues. If there is a run and the money is withdrawn this interest is lost to the depositor. The First National will get the use of the money until the scare is over. They announced to-night that their interest would be paid. When the scare is over they will cut off the interest and send the money back to their savings bank, while, in the meantime, the standing of my bank is lost."

"There is just one thing to be done," said Degnon, producing a bank form. "Put electricity into your bank." "How will that help?" asked the banker. "It is a sign of enterprise, but I am afraid in a few days I shall have no bank to light."

Degnon smiled. "I have an idea," he explained. "I think it is a good one."

With trembling hand, Morrow signed the contract and Degnon rose to go. In the hall he stopped to say good night to Daisy and explain that he had to run some one on business on his way home, hence his haste.

"The 'some one' was the mayor's secretary, and as a result of the visit a permit was issued the following morning as soon as the office opened, to tear up the street for the purpose of installing the light service in the Union Bank."

could not make himself understood. At last the Italian seemed to comprehend and dropping back into the pit seized a pickaxe and smashed through the obstruction, proudly handing out a bulky cylinder, now gaping wide to show its end of crisp brass.

"No take da mon!" explained the Italian. "Hones man. Ver bones man. No take da mon!"

In a flash the crowd understood. The money was meeting the run by paying out money sent from the street front. First National. The money was making an endless chain, being paid out over and over again. Half a dozen men in the crowd began to explain how the bank was profiting by the operation of interest. Ridgley retired hurriedly. With the crowd in its present temper, he was not anxious to be within its reach. A little talk would precipitate a riot.

But Degnon had planned skillfully, and his orators talked just enough to check the run in the Union. There were muttered threats, but the drain was stopped and a back flow of depositors was started toward the Union. Ridgley's reprisal had proven boomering.

That evening Degnon explained to Daisy and her father his inspiration.

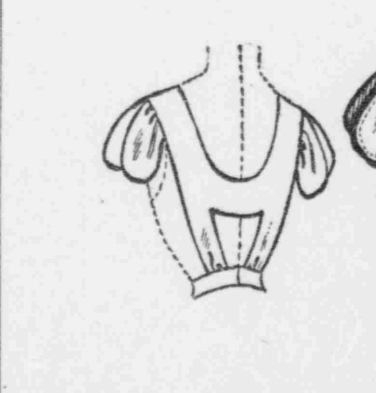
"I was looking over the installation in the First National," he told them, "and I saw that there was a pipe of the pneumatic system that led out of the building. I thought it odd at the time when you spoke of the relations between the two banks, I realized the game. They could shift the money back and forth as it was needed and no one was the wiser. If there is a run and the money is withdrawn a crowbar through the pipe. That was all."

"I should like to give something to that Italian foreman," said Daisy. "You might give him a kiss," suggested Degnon. "At college I was one of the stars of the dramatic club."

"You were the foreman?" cried Daisy. "You shall have a dozen kisses," she said. "You shall have no protest at Degnon's prompt collection."

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FETCHING BRETLES AND A JUMPER.



2534

Last Night at the Playhouses

The Belasco—The Edwin Arden Company in "The Importance of Being Earnest."

An audience that filled every part of the theater greeted the opening, last night, of the Edwin Arden Company at the Belasco Theater. It was a night of enthusiastic greeting for the return of Mr. Arden and his support, and on Mr. Arden's first appearance in the character of John Worthing he received an ovation of applause that lasted several minutes and halted the action of the play.

Each member of this excellent summer company has been greeted with enthusiasm, and from admirers in the audience all of the feminine members of the cast received, at the end of the second act, handsome bouquets of flowers. Another unusual incident was the taking of a flashlight picture of the audience after the first act. Everybody present had a card which entitled them to a reproduction of the photograph as a souvenir of the occasion.

The play chosen for the opening was Mr. Oscar Wilde's clever comedy for serious people, "The Importance of Being Earnest." The title itself is a play on words, as the plot hinges on the fact that no man whose name is not Ernest. The two men in the case are John Worthing and Algernon Moncrieff, both of whom assume the name and resolve to be re-christened, when opportunity offers, for the sake of winning the girl.

The plot of the piece, while markedly clever and bright, is simple in the extreme, and there is not a great deal of action in the comedy; but from the time the curtain rises on the first act until it falls on John Worthing's ardent statement that he now realizes the importance of being Ernest, his dialogue is so smart and brilliant, so sparkling with epigram, aphorism, absurd paradox, and wonderful wit that the audience is kept in a roar of laughter.

It is so good a play that the question must have occurred to many last night: Why has it been allowed to lie idle so long while so many stupid comedies have held the stage? Of course, the answer is to be found in the reputation of its author; his sins and his punishment—but he is dead, and the brilliant plays, his poems, and the literature in which he expressed the best side of himself still live, and probably will live when many things that have been written in disparage of their author have been forgotten. At any rate, "The Importance of Being Earnest" is one of the cleverest, smartest, and most amusing comedies that has graced the English-speaking stage for many years, and one who fails to see it misses an intellectual treat.

The Edwin Arden Company is a thoroughly competent one, and does most excellent work. It shows, throughout, the effect of careful drill, ripe experience, and clear understanding of the work cut out. Each member of the cast distinguished himself last night; each is entitled to a personal commendation, and the team work—to use a baseball term—was fine.

Mr. Arden as John Worthing did some very fine work. He has some difficult situations which he handles with grace and skill; notably the situation where, in the second act, he enters, in mourning, for the dead brother who never existed. He showed his mastery of stagecraft, also, in the last act in the scene with Miss Prism, the lady who lost him in a handbag. Throughout he lent full value to the clever lines and made the most of every situation, so that his performance was strikingly clever and satisfactory.

The Algeon of Mr. Charles Moncrieff was very well played, too, though Mr. Moncrieff was not quite as sure of his lines as he was in his later performances. But he did excellent work notwithstanding. Very clever characters were the Rev. Canon Chuzzlewit of Mr. Edward Ellis and the Lane of Mr. Edwin Fowler.

The women of the company it would be hard, indeed, to better. There has seldom been a more graceful or charming

dom been a more graceful or charming ingenue than Miss Jessie Glendinning, who plays Cecily, and Miss Chrystal Horne, as Gwendolen, was very clever. Fine character ability was displayed by Miss Alice Butler, as Alice Bicknell; indeed, it was one of the best acted parts on the stage. But the company as a whole is deserving of the very highest praise. It gave a fine clear-cut, and most enjoyable performance, and any one who desires to be amused cannot do better than go and see this brilliant comedy brilliantly performed.

The Columbia Stock Company in "Diplomacy."

An audience which filled every seat in the playhouse marked the opening of the second week of the post-season at the Columbia Theater last night. The play was "Diplomacy," that masterpiece of Victorian Sardou, as given to the English speaking stage by Belasco and De Mille. Without going too deeply into the intricacies of the plot, it is enough to say that in points of absorbing interest, cleverness of constructive detail, strongly stirring episodes, and intensity of numerous impressive climaxes this play stands almost unequalled in modern times. Setting the mentality of a clever man over against the shrewdness of an unscrupulous woman, with a bly play around the character of those of lesser caliber, the play is consistently built up from a somewhat slow foundation to a moving drama of thrilling action; and the wonder of it all is in observing how the playwright constantly and adroitly shifts the interest, and then brings it back with redoubled force to the main theme.

Another force at work last night was the cast of extraordinary celebrity, embracing Wilton Lackaye, Hilda Spong, and Charlotte Walker, all favorites in this city, supported by an excellent company, the majority of which enjoy the same distinction, the entire force uniting in a performance of smoothness remarkable for a first night's effort.

The honors undoubtedly go to Miss Hilda Spong, who appeared as Countess Zicka. The role is pregnant with opportunity, and she was fully equal to the exigency, the emotional scenes being especially marked by a telling method of repression, and her whole work evidencing a clear comprehension of the make-up of the adventures, who, beneath all her duplicity, had the simple soul of a woman.

Mr. Wilton Lackaye gave a striking impersonation of Henry Beauchere, the English master of diplomacy. His striking presence, fine voice, and convincing method all contributing toward creating the effect intended by the author, in making this the leading male character, despite the fact that he figures not in the love elements.

Miss Charlotte Walker was as fascinating as ever in the role of Dora, acted with intelligence, enhanced by superior personal charms, and Mr. Walter Howe made a conspicuous success as Count Orme, being especially strong in the scene in the second act in which he figures with the Beauchere Brothers. In fact, his acting at this point was the most powerful of all in giving success to this remarkable situation.

Others who aided in the performance with material efforts were Guy Nichols, as Baron Stein; Guy Coubles, as Algie Fairfax; Miss Effie Darling, as Marquise de Riva; Miss Nellie Francis, as Lady Fairfax; and William Lamp, as Julian Beauchere, the latter detracting from the power of his delineation, however, by pitching the key a little too high in the strong scenes. The production is well staged, and all the surroundings adequate.

Harry Gilfoil, the Chief Entertainer at Chase's.

Harry Gilfoil is the principal entertainer at Chase's this week. He calls his stunts "mimetic masterpieces," which may be the right name—at any rate they are very entertaining. Preceding him is another unusually good act, provided by the Nichols sisters, who appear in the guise of black-face comedienne.

The Belclair Brothers give a short but brilliant performance, in which their remarkable strength is shown in novel feats. They are by far the best acrobats that have been here this season. Carroll Henry and Nellie Francis appear in a comedy satire, a most novel and original sketch, that was much enjoyed. Fields and Woolley have an amusing song and dance skit that won hearty applause, and James F. Kelly and Annie M. Kent are even more entertaining with their clever burlesque work. Miss Alice Allen and her company complete the bill.

The Majestic—The Great Northwest.

"The Great Northwest" was the attraction that drew a large audience at the Majestic yesterday afternoon and evening. While the production does not compare with the play presented last week, it was adequate enough to exploit the abilities of the different members of the company, and applause often greeted the members of the cast during the performance. The scenic and mechanical effects were not as they might have been, owing, perhaps, to the lack of rehearsal. Nevertheless the performance was, from some standpoints, a success, and as the play progresses and the mechanical effects are running more smoothly the play will be a typical Purcell show.

Miss Purcell, as Grace Harding, was excellent. Miss Purcell has long since established a reputation for her appearance on the stage is always the occasion for an enthusiastic outburst of applause. Miss Florence Hill was a captivating ingenue and won the appreciation of her audience by her vivacity. W. Jeff Murphy was good as Cap Sheel, and Clarence Chase made a distinct "hit" as the nervy and outspoken New Yorker. Nick Judella is always good, and this week he shows up to good advantage as the chief of the fire department of Wheat Center. Ed Allen does the best work of his engagement as the chief of the Boom City fire department. His specialty after the third act was the bright particular doings of the performance. Paul Barant made a good Earl Foxwell, and the remainder of the cast gave suitable support.

New Lyceum—The Thoroughbreds.

"The Thoroughbreds" played a return engagement at the New Lyceum yesterday, with two burlesques, "The Union Men" and "A Good Run for Your Money." There seems to be no reason for the return engagement, as the show is far below the ordinary run of traveling shows. The only redeeming feature of the performance was the different specialties of the company, which included Mlle. La Toska, Douglas and Cunningham, Stevens and Boehm, Washburn and Rely.

Aged Man Hit by Car.

Andrew W. Pentland, of 1230 Eighteenth street, while getting off a Fourteenth street car between H street and New York avenue yesterday afternoon, was struck by a car and thrown to the pavement. As Mr. Pentland is nearly eighty years old, it was feared that some serious injury had been done. Officers McGarry took him to the George Washington Hospital, where his injuries were dressed and found to be of a superficial character. Mr. Pentland was later taken to his home.

AMUSEMENTS.

BELASCO EYE, PRICES, 25c to 75c
WED. MATINEE
EDWIN ARDEN
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST
SPECIAL—All men named "Ernest" admitted FREE at Matinee to-morrow.
NEXT WEEK—"THE GAY LORD QUEX."

MAJESTIC
THE FAMILY THEATRE
MATS. MON. WED. & SAT.
6TH-GREAT WEEK OF SUCCESS-6TH
W. D. Fitzgerald Presents
KATHRYN PURNELL
AND COMPANY IN
The Great Northwest.
Next Week—UNDER TWO FLAGS.

LACKAYE AND SPONG
THE COLUMBIA THEATRE CO.
—Introducing—
CHARLOTTE WALKER
IN SARDOU'S
DIPLOMACY
BY DAVID BELASCO AND H. C. DE MILLE.
PRICES: Matinee, 25c and 50c.
Next Week—F. L. H. "KATHERINE,"
With Entire Company.

Chase's VAUDEVILLE
Prize Matinee, 25c, 50c, and 75c.
HARRY GILFOIL Musical Comedian.
In "THE GREAT SUNDAY"
NITA ALLEN & CO. in "Dora's Great Week"
THE NICHOLS SISTERS, BELLAIR BROS.
James F. Kelly and Annie M. Kent, Fields and W. J. Murphy, House of Fun, "FRANK AND ERNEST," "THE ADVENTURES," Motion Pictures, "DANIEL BOONE'S ADVENTURES," Motion Pictures, "THE WEEK-DAN BURKE AND HIS GAL," "THE COLLEGE OF COMEDY," "FRANK AND ERNEST," "SEAL AND VIOLET ALLEN CO. & CO. BUY MATS. TO-DAY."

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